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ABSTRACT

One of a series of publications to assist Australian secondary school instructors in teaching social studies skills, this booklet introduces students to methods of using the library, media, and local community for data collection. Ten chapters provide a wide variety of activities for using the library; studying the local community; using street directories, local maps, and the telephone directory; using atlases; making phone calls; writing letters; analyzing photographs; working with figures; and reading the local newspaper. A final chapter contains exercises to aid students in taking notes and organizing information. Each chapter is illustrated with numerous photographs, drawings, and charts. A list of useful resources concludes the publication. (LP)

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FINDING THE FACTS

SOCIAL SCIENCE SKILLS BOOK 2

Howard Kelly
Brian Woodruff
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Curriculum Development Centre
Canberra
Australia

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CONTENTS

	Introduction	5
1	Using the library	6
2	Studying the local community	9
3	Street directories and local maps	11
4	Using an atlas	13
5	The Telephone Directory	14
6	Making telephone calls	15
7	Letter writing	16
8	Photographs	19
9	Working with figures	22
10	The daily newspaper	27
11	Organising information and notetaking	32
	Other useful publications	36

FOREWORD

Although the nature of social science courses and social science teaching in Australia has changed significantly over the past decade, there still remains a rather undue emphasis on the teaching of factual information. This has generally been to the detriment of the achievement of other social science aims and objectives. More recently, however, there has emerged a growing concern for the achievement of these other aims such as the development of skills, and the growth of positive attitudes and values.

In recognition of this, the Curriculum Development Centre is publishing a series of booklets to assist teachers in the area of skill development. The booklets are practical and provide background to specific skill areas, guidelines for programs to develop such skills, and a wide range of student activities which can be readily incorporated into existing programs.

The titles in the series are as follows:

1 **Teaching Social Science Skills**
This provides teachers with a broad introduction to the area of skills development and the implications for classroom teaching.

2 **Finding the Facts**
A booklet designed to provide students with skills relating to data collection through the use of the library, media, and the local community.

3 **Social Survey**
As the title suggests, this booklet shows students how to use survey techniques and explains their contribution to gathering data in the school and community.

4 **Presenting Information**
This booklet outlines to students different methods for getting the message to the audience.

5 **Assessment and Evaluation**
This provides teachers with a simple introduction to assessment and evaluation in the social sciences.

6 **Working in Groups**
This booklet provides teachers with guidelines for effective organisation of students groups in the classroom.

We believe that these materials have a much wider learning and teaching application than the series title nominates. Indeed, it will be surprising if the booklets do not become an essential resource in teacher development activities.

Their appearance is timely and they will, we are sure, be well received.

DAVID FRANCIS
Acting Director

INTRODUCTION

Social science seeks to increase our understanding of the community in which we live. But before you can accurately analyse problems of society you must first find all the relevant information. Before questions can be adequately answered you must have all the available facts.

The search for useful information can be both enjoyable and rewarding if you know **where** and **how** to look. This book considers the more common sources of **information** and the basic **research skills**.

Some of the sources and skills are ones with which you will be already familiar, but now they are used for social investigation. It becomes important to think like a detective:

- to look at details in a fresh light and recognise that they may be useful for your search,
- to know which organisations, publications and people are likely to be able to give additional information, and
- to be able to sort out and analyse the results of your search.

1 USING THE LIBRARY

The school library is a valuable source of information, and it is important to know how it works and where things are stored.

Draw a sketch plan of the library and mark in the following:

- the loans desk
- the fiction shelves
- the non-fiction shelves
- the periodical shelves
- the catalogue drawers
- the vertical file
- the reference section
- other useful sections e.g. where the audio-visual material is stored
- the location of the librarian and library assistants

Note what information is kept in each of these sections. The librarian will help you with any details which you might find difficult to locate.

Find out when the library is open and how to borrow books, either for a lesson or to take home.

Visit your local library and find out:

- how to join
- how the borrowing system works
- where the various collections are kept

The following exercises involve some basic research skills using the library as the main resource. They will give you some idea of the many different types of books and periodicals from which you can obtain information.

Locate the following reference material in the library:

- the official *Year Book of Australia*
- the official *Year Book* of your state
- a biographical novel
- an atlas
- a general encyclopaedia
- a daily newspaper
- a foreign language dictionary
- an Australian history book

List the catalogue numbers used in the Dewey classification system for the following topics:

- religion
- history
- English literature

Remember - the librarian is there to help you

What reference sources would you use to answer the following questions:

- On what river is Gundagai situated?
- What was daily life like on paddle boats in Australia last century?
- How many tonnes of irrigated rice were produced in Australia last year?
- In which street is the entrance to the main railway station in your capital city?
- What were the major sporting fixtures last Saturday?

National Geographic, *Geo*, *Choice*, and *Time* are examples of periodicals that provide useful information, especially as they are up-to-date and deal with many current topics and issues.
Find out the names of any other periodicals in the library that are useful for:

- overseas news
- aspects of Australian politics
- environmental issues
- social issues, both in Australia and overseas

Make a collection of material available from reference books, newspapers, etc. on one of the following topics:

- transport
- family life
- crime and violence in society
- religions throughout the world
- some other topic relevant to your studies

This material could be collected by groups of students and kept in a central file, or you could keep it in a folder or scrap book.

It is very useful to keep a reference section in your workbook or folder. This can often save you a great deal of time in your research. This information could be transferred to cards and kept in a box or file for the use of other members of the class. These cards could be arranged according to the alphabetical order of the topics. A simple reference listing could include the following details:

TITLE: *'Is This the End'*

AUTHOR: *J. C. Peters*

PUBLISHER: *P. J. Publishing Co.*

YEAR OF PUBLICATION: *1981*

CALL NUMBER: *919·4*

SECTION/S OR PAGES USED: *Chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 44 - 72)*

COMMENTS: *Really good information on problems in large cities e.g. pollution, traffic and housing*

2 STUDYING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The local community is a valuable source of information. Much of this information can be helpful to you in your daily life as a resident of the area, while other information can be used to find out how the community came to be as it is today, what it was like in the past, and the reasons for its growth.

Use the local paper as an introduction to the local community. Make up a directory or list of information about local resources and issues. Read through and cut out items from the local paper on:

- community facilities e.g. health services, meeting halls
- sporting activities e.g. coaching programs, dates for local fixtures
- people of interest e.g. local sportspeople, artists and craftsmen, local identities
- local issues e.g. re-zoning of land, transport services
- entertainment e.g. theatre programs, dances, concerts

These items can then be arranged on sheets of paper under the appropriate headings. Add any other details you can on these topics using parents, other residents, the council offices, or any local groups or societies as sources of information.

Which newspapers are available in your community? Are they daily, weekly, state or national? How much local news do they contain?

Make up one sheet of information on a topic of special interest. Such topics might include:

- part-time jobs
- notices about club activities
- special bargains in local record or clothing shops
- information on how to advertise through the local paper
- letters to the editor on any matters relating to the school or the local area

This could be displayed on a notice board and updated each week.

Where would you find the best local sources of information about:

- the life of the early settlers
- employment of school leavers
- the operation of the local council
- obtaining advertising for the school paper or magazine
- the results of the most recent council elections
- regulations about selling cakes from your home
- subjects taught in other schools in your area
- attitudes towards public transport in the area

INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY OF YOUR LOCAL AREA?

Two kinds of written materials help us study local history:

Original documents like letters and diaries are called **primary sources**.

People use primary sources as they write their books about an earlier time. These books are called **secondary sources**.

Secondary sources have some weaknesses:

- *Other people writing about the same topic may not agree with the author's opinions about it — people see things in different ways.*
- *The whole truth may not be in a secondary source. The author may have put too much emphasis on some facts and missed others. This can be overcome by reading several authors. However, by far the best way is to use primary sources.*

Primary sources are often difficult to use because:

- *They are hard to find.*
- *When they are found, it may take many hours of reading to find the piece of information you want.*
- *They are often hard to read and understand.*

Where to find primary sources:

- *Public libraries, state archives, museums.*
- *Newspaper files; advertisements, etc.*
- *Government departments; Lands Department, local government bodies, post offices, clerks of courts, etc.*
- *Your home; letters and post-cards, maps, paintings, photographs, etc.*
- *Private firms; bills, receipts, etc.*

THINGS YOU COULD DO

Look around your community for sites and buildings which 'tell a story' of their past. Find enough information to cover the time from the first government to the present.
Take colour slides of each building or site.
Look for written descriptions to match your set of slides. You will probably have to use primary and secondary sources. Tape record different people reading these descriptions.
Use the slides and descriptions to tell the story. By playing the tape while you show the slides, you can show how the community has evolved from its start to the present.
Perhaps you could make a booklet to record your story. Take black and white photos of the same buildings and sites, paste them into the book along with the written descriptions.•

• SEMP, Community Evolution, Card 7.

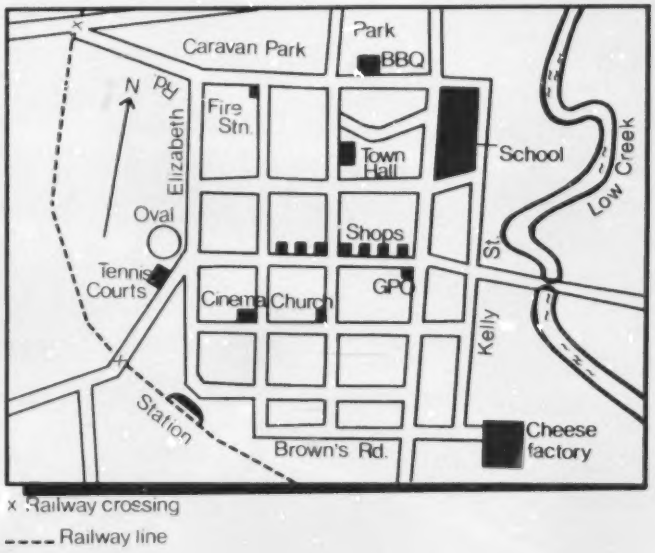
3 STREET DIRECTORIES AND LOCAL MAPS

Maps can provide quite a deal of useful information about an area. Maps help to explain where places are. Maps can show how certain things are arranged; for example, where shopping centres are, road and highway systems, the distribution of parks and sporting fields, bus and railway routes, and residential areas. Maps can also help people, who are not familiar with an area, to find their way around.

Using a street directory or a road map, draw or trace a map of the local area. On the map, mark in the following:

- major street and road names
- transport routes
- short cuts through laneways from home to school or to friends' homes
- hazards such as fierce dogs, dangerous crossings, people who complain about children
- good shops for food, clothes, and special hobbies e.g. bicycle shops, squash courts

Make up symbols for features on the map and provide a legend to explain them



Remember - a map should always have a north pointer and a scale - even if its approximate

INTERESTED IN URBAN TRAILS?

An urban trail is a walk or ride through urban areas. By 'trailing' you can gather information and discover points of interest to study in greater depth. You might start at the school and walk or ride through the local shopping centre, through some parklands, or around several neighbourhood blocks.

Things to look for:

- *People — What are they doing?*
- *Buildings — Are they old, new, in good condition, or being replaced?*
- *Advertising — What type of advertising can you find; billboards, neon signs, hand-painted signs ... ?*
- *Industry — Is there light or heavy industry? Does local industry provide many jobs?*
- *Transport — What types of transport are available? Is it adequate for everyone in the community?*
- *Housing — Is it a newly developed area, or is it well established? Is the housing mainly cottages, flats, high rise, cottages, or terraces?*

There are a variety of other things that you can look for and record on an urban trail; many of these are mentioned in the SEMP booklet Urban Trails.

14

4 USING THE ATLAS

An atlas can do more than just help you locate streets, towns, cities, countries, and natural features such as mountain ranges and rivers. An atlas can also provide information such as the distribution of population, crops and industries. By comparing atlas maps produced at different times it is also possible to see historical changes that have taken place.

Trace an outline map of Australia, and mark in:

- the borders of your state or territory
- five major cities in your state or territory
- any islands off the sea coast
- the direction of the equator
- the direction of Antarctica
- the main water supply sources for the capital city

Check the main news items in the daily paper and locate five significant towns or cities overseas that have been mentioned in the news. Find out which country each city is in, and note down any details that help you to understand more about that place.

Using a full-page atlas map of your state or territory, select two important towns or cities:

- Calculate the distance between them in a straight line.
- Name any mountain ranges you would pass over when flying along this route.
- Name any major rivers you would cross.
- Name any major highways you would cross.
- Describe the types of agriculture you would expect to find along the way.
- Find the shortest way to travel by land between the two points.
- Using the symbols in the key to the map, identify any cities with populations over 50 000.

Find an atlas that is perhaps five or ten years old (even older if you can!) and compare the maps with those in a more recently produced atlas. What major differences can you see? For instance, you might like to look at the names of countries and find any that have changed. Suggest reasons why this might have happened.

5 THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

Telephones and telephone directories can be used to locate information quickly.

Look through the main telephone book for your district or state and find out how to:

- send a telegram
- report service difficulties
- make STD calls
- answer recorded messages
- find new numbers

Make your own directory. Use a special notebook divided into sections for each letter of the alphabet. Write in numbers that you use frequently and include:

- the local post office
- the local council office
- other schools in the area
- the nearest railway station
- the nearest Commonwealth Employment Service
- any sporting clubs you belong to
- the nearest picture theatres
- the local police station
- the nearest hospital
- other emergency numbers
- the local library

What does this symbol mean to you?

THINGS TO DO

Use the following situations for practice in looking up numbers:

- You have found a kangaroo which has been hit and fatally injured by a car. A joey is alive in its pouch and you want to ring the state government department in charge of wildlife. Which other organisations might also be able to help you?
- You spot a fleet of flying saucers and you want to ring the Department of Defence, an Australian Government department.
- You have a new interstate penfriend and you want to find her postcode to address the letter properly. Where do you look?
- You have to ring your school to tell the Principal you are going to be late returning from holidays.
- Your little brother has a bad cut on his arm. You cannot get through to your local doctor. It's six o'clock at night. Where could you get treatment?
- You want to ring your grandmother in the country to wish her a happy birthday. You need to find her number, find out how to place a person-to-person trunk call, and then find out how much the call will cost.
- You wish to send a telegram to your cousin who is getting married.
- Look up alternative spellings of the family names: Brown, Nichols, Smith, McKay, Chapple, Philips, Foster, Stevens, Reid, Johnson, Olsen, Marr, Cook, Davies. Are there any other family names you know of that have alternative spellings?

6 MAKING TELEPHONE CALLS

First, test how carefully you listen.

- Pass a whispered message around the class and see how it becomes changed between the start and the finish.
- All listen to a tape recorded message and see how much of it you can understand the first time you hear it.
- Listen to a song you have never heard before and see how much of it you can understand.
- Listen to a talk-back program (or a recording of a program) and rate people on:

  how well they put their point across,
  how long they take to make the point,
  how clearly they speak, and
  how well they have worked out what they want to say.

Use the following situations for practising your telephone technique. Work in pairs.

- Irate shopper to consumer protection advisor.

  You have bought a new jacket and it has fallen apart. There is no guarantee and the people at the shop where it was purchased refuse to replace it. You are not satisfied with this so you ring the Consumer Affairs Bureau or any other consumer protection group to lodge your complaint and get advice.

- Patient to tape recorded message at doctor's office.

  You ring the doctor to re-order a prescription, but the doctor is not available and a tape recording instructs you to leave a message giving your name, address, and reason for ringing.

- An individual to a new friend.

  You ring to ask a friend to visit you. As the friend has never been to your place before, you have to describe how to get there.

- Class representative to a theatre booking agent.

  You are in charge of organising a booking for a film that the whole class is going to see. Make sure you obtain all the necessary information.

- A member of the public to railway employees.

  You are expecting a parcel and you ring the railways to see if it has arrived. They think it has arrived, but keep switching you through to different departments to try to find it.

- Concerned radio listener to talk-back radio compere.

  You ring up to defend young people who have been blamed for littering the local park.

- An applicant for a job to an employer.

  You have seen a job as a trainee manager advertised in the morning paper. You ring up to arrange an interview.

Remember -
it's often wise to have a pen and paper with you when you make a telephone call

7 LETTER WRITING

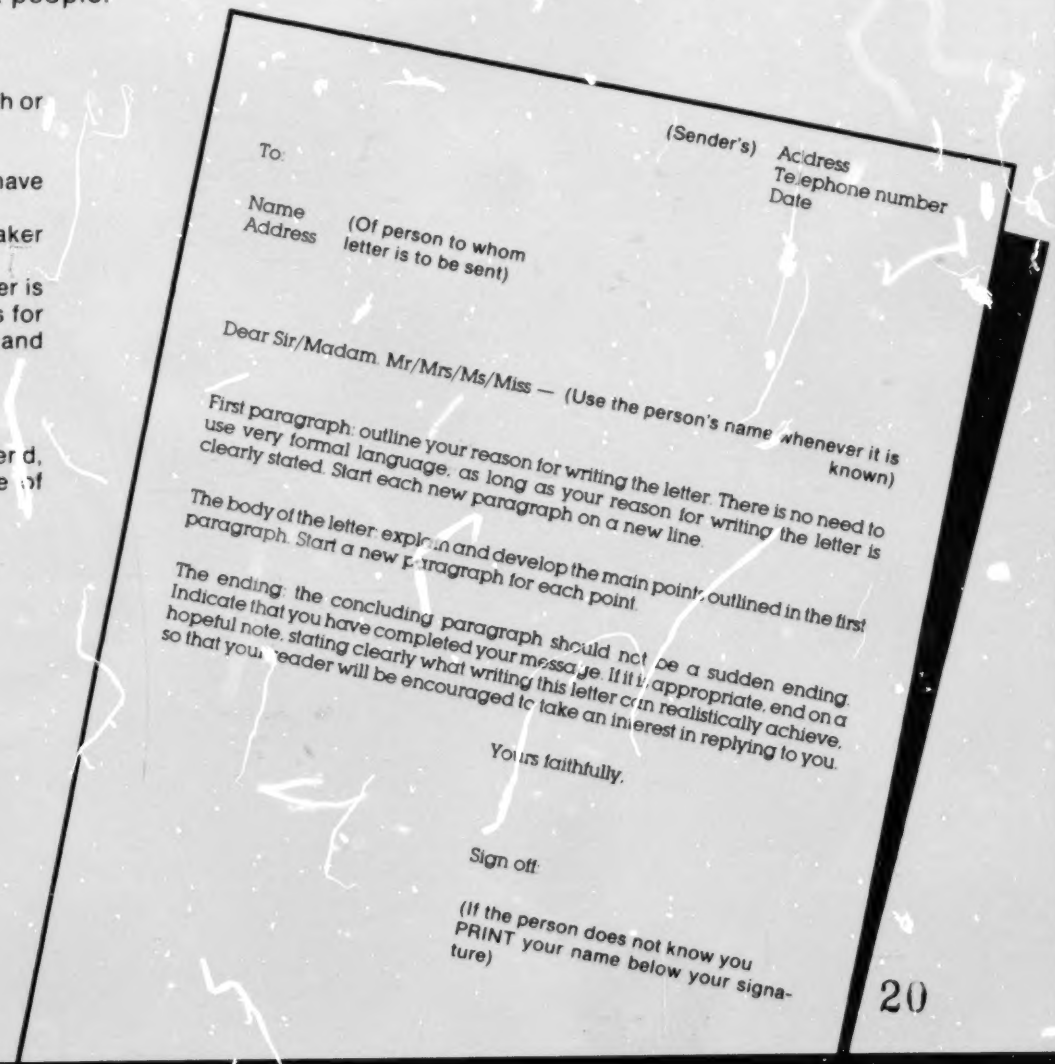
As well as communicating news to friends or relatives, writing a letter is perhaps the best way to communicate with somebody about matters that need a careful reply, or about matters that will need to be passed on to several different people.

Examples of such situations include:

- asking for information for your research or investigation
- applying for a job
- informing a company that goods you have purchased are faulty
- asking an organisation for a guest speaker

A general guide for setting out such a letter is given here, followed by some suggestions for practising letter writing to different people and organisations.

For a more informal letter to a relative or friend, you may make changes to suit the type of letter.



(Sender's) Address
Telephone number
Date

To:

Name
Address (Of person to whom letter is to be sent)

Dear Sir/Madam. Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss — (Use the person's name whenever it is known)

First paragraph: outline your reason for writing the letter. There is no need to use very formal language, as long as your reason for writing the letter is clearly stated. Start each new paragraph on a new line.

The body of the letter: explain and develop the main points outlined in the first paragraph. Start a new paragraph for each point.

The ending: the concluding paragraph should not be a sudden ending. Indicate that you have completed your message. If it is appropriate, end on a hopeful note, stating clearly what writing this letter can realistically achieve, so that your reader will be encouraged to take an interest in replying to you.

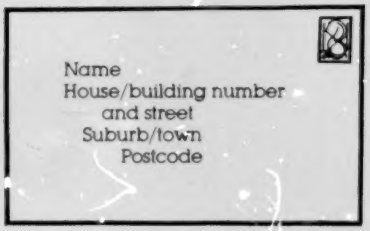
Yours faithfully,

Sign off

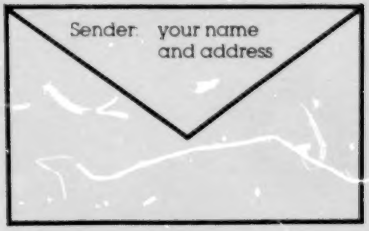
(If the person does not know you PRINT your name below your signature)

Remember - write as clearly as possible so that your message is understood

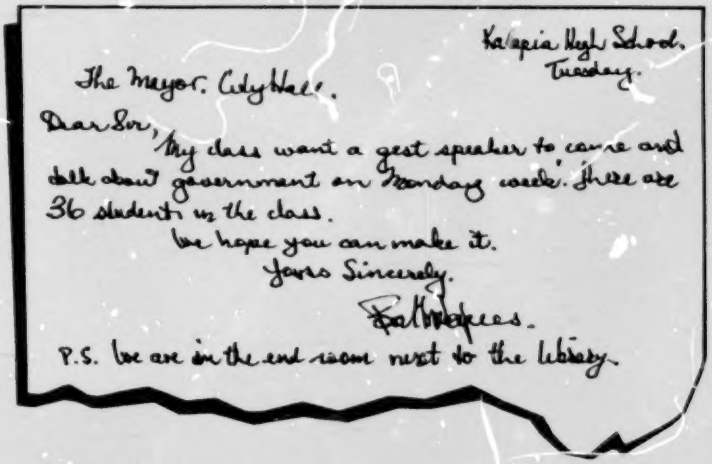
And the envelope ....
on the front



On the back



Read the letter below, and then answer the questions about it.



Kalapia High School.
Tuesday.

The Mayor. Cityhall.

Dear Sir,

My class want a guest speaker to come and talk about government on Monday week. There are 36 students in the class.

We hope you can make it.

Yours Sincerely.

P.S. We are in the end room next to the library.

Remember - some organisations and government departments may have a post box number for their postal address

- What do you think is wrong with the letter?
- What does it tell the person to whom it was sent?
- If you were that person what other information would you want to know?

Imagine that you have been asked to contact the local council to arrange for a guest speaker to visit your class to talk about local government. Write a letter to the mayor.

21

THINGS TO DO

- Arrange to write to a penfriend overseas. Include in your letter some information about yourself, some information about Australia that you think your friend might find interesting, and some questions about the overseas country you would like to have answered.

- Write to someone at another school and ask about any new ideas for raising money for school equipment or a public cause. You will need to explain what you have already tried, and what sort of activity you think would be most successful. If necessary, ring the school first to ask for the name of the student representative your letter should be sent to.

- Collect and read letters to the editor from your daily paper. When you find a letter on a topic that you feel strongly about, write a reply to it, either agreeing or disagreeing with it.

- Look through the employment section of the paper and when you find a job that you think would be interesting write a letter of application for the job.

- Write a message that would fit on a postcard telling someone that you plan to visit her soon.

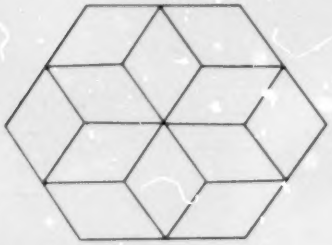
8 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs are particularly useful as a source of data on past events or places that we cannot visit. They can be examined at leisure in minute detail, and they can form a permanent record of a topic.

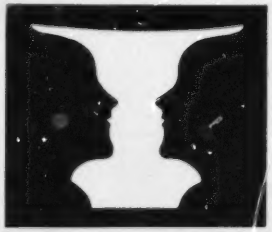
When using any visual material as a data source individuals will find different meanings depending on their background, ideas, and interests.

The diagrams below are examples of this:

How many ways can you 'see' this diagram?



When and why do you change from 'seeing' this diagram in one way and then in another? Can you control this by looking at part of the picture rather than the whole?



We often see the same places or scenes differently from other people.
Each photographer selects his viewpoint and frames his photograph differently from every other photographer. Every picture you see is based on the selective judgement of some photographer.

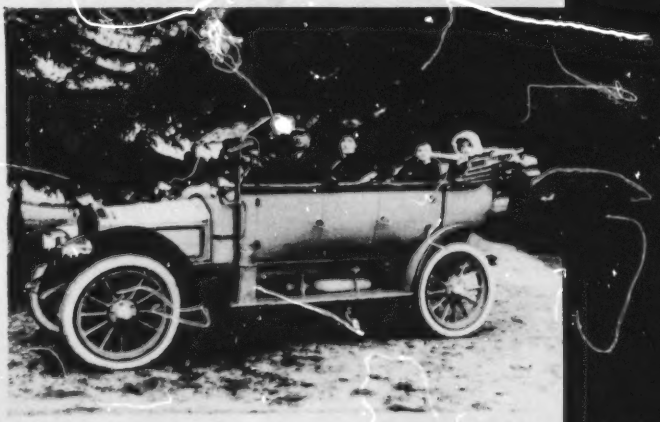
THINGS TO DO

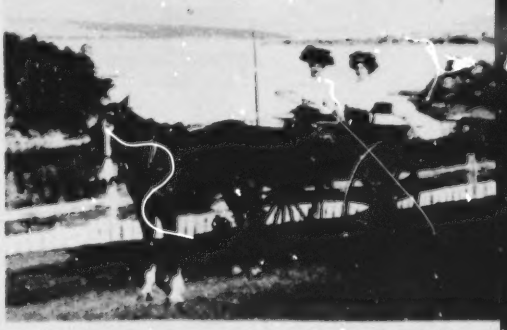
Collect a series of photographs from a periodical such as *Geo* or *National Geographic* and use them to illustrate and explain the lifestyle of a group of people. For instance, you might select photographs of clothing, housing, the people at work, religious celebrations, and their paintings, sculpture, or artefacts.

Collect a series of photographs taken of a political or local figure. Write in conversation balloons that might show the mood of the photographs.

Collect or find a series of photographs that record some kind of change. For example, photographs of different forms of transport, house building, different clothing types, or a series of significant events.

Find or take a photograph which shows the 'new' and the 'old'; for example, a new building built beside an older one, people dressed in clothes from different times. Try to explain the differences.





Photographs: *Archives Office of Tasmania*

Make a story out of a series of photographs or cartoons. You might like to read the photostories *Steven*, *Michael*, and *Geoff*, (SEMP) which will give you ideas.

"And anyway, we should win by playing fair -- not by knuckling their best player."
"Knock it off Geoff -- they'll try to do it to you. We've got to win it, you know?"
"I know Chris, I know! But it used to be fun playing football. Now it's just winning."

WORKING WITH FIGURES

ny aspects of work in the social sciences require that you work with figures and tables. The lowing exercises will give you practice in the type of skills that you will need.

n the figure 32 041 the 2 stands for

2 hundreds 2 tens 2 thousands 2 ones?

½ of 528 is

¾ of 528 is

20% of 350 is

18.7 + 9.2 =

14.6 + 7.8 =

27.9 × 6 =

Read the table below, is it warmer at 10 a.m. or 5 p.m.?

Time	Temperature (celsius)
8 a.m.	14
11 a.m.	17
2 p.m.	22
5 p.m.	18

A train travelled 150km in 5 hours. What speed per hour did it average?

How many days are there between 19 January and 16 February?

How many hours are there between 5 a.m. and 4 p.m.?

This exercise is an example developed to practise the skill of calculating percentages:

- There has been a national wage rise of 3%. This means that each wage earner receives an extra $3 for every $100 he/she earns. Therefore, if Mr Bloggs earns $200 per week, he gets $6 increase. The formula to calculate this is

$$\frac{\$200 \times 3}{100} = \$6$$

- Mr Bloggs decides to pass this wage increase on to his six children:

Joe (aged 4)	25¢ per week
Susan (aged 5)	40¢
Sandra (aged 8)	65¢
Peter (aged 10)	$1
Robert (aged 12)	$1.75
Debbie (aged 14)	$2.50

If they get the 3% increase what is their new weekly rate of pocket money?

An example: Joe
Calculation
$\left(\frac{25 \times 3}{100} = \frac{3}{4}\right)$
∴ increase of 1 cent and Joe receives a new sum of 26c

Information is often presented as figures in graphs and tables so that it is:

- simple
- clear
- easy to use

It is useful to know how to interpret figures presented in these forms, and also how to present your own information as numbers.

GRAPHS AND PERCENTAGES

List the town, suburb, or area that each student in your class comes from. Calculate the percentage of students that come from each area.
You might draw up a table like the one below.

SUBURB, TOWN OR AREA	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF CLASS
Arrowsfield	*6*	*16·5*
Ascot	*2*	*5·75*
Albion Heights	*4*	*11·5*
New Farm	*12*	*33·3*

Record the percentages from your table on a bar graph, or another type of graph, so that the results are easy to read.

Suggest ways in which your information could be used by such bodies as the school administration, the education department, the transport department, or parents.

TABLES

Using a table is one way of examining relationships between different things.

Using the table below, plot the eye and hair colour of every member of the class.

EYE COLOUR	HAIR COLOUR					
	Light Brown	Medium Brown	Dark Brown	Black	Blonde	Red
Grey						
Green						
Brown						
Hazel						
Blue						

Use the information on the table to answer the following questions:

- If you have dark brown hair, what colour are your eyes likely to be?
- What is the most common hair colour of people with blue eyes?
- List any other subjects where it would be useful to relate two aspects to each other on this kind of table.

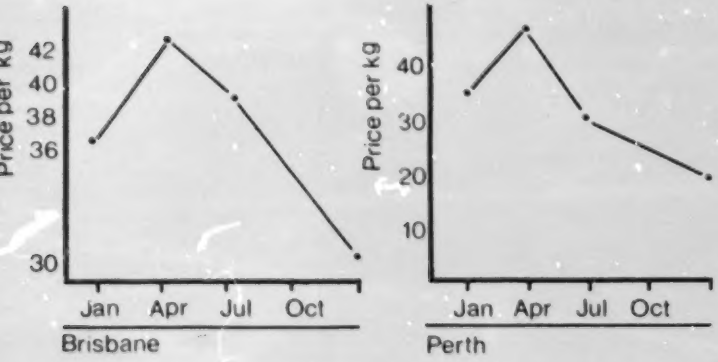
STATISTICS

'You can prove anything by using figures.'

This is often said in situations where statistics are quoted, but not supported by evidence. Statistics appear in textbooks, newspapers, opinion polls, advertisements, and many reports, and can provide very valuable information — if they are correctly interpreted.

Examine the following statements, and work out what the figures really mean:

- 'The average income per head in Australia is $5 000 a year. If a family includes two parents and eight children, does this mean that their income would be $50 000 a year?'
- The two graphs below show the change in the price of potatoes in Brisbane and Perth during one period of ten months.



- In which city were there the biggest changes in potato prices during the year?
- When were potatoes cheapest in both cities?
- In which city was it possible to buy the cheapest potatoes?
- What difficulties arise when you compare the information on these two graphs?

HOW STATISTICS CAN BE USED

An advertisement claims that:

'Seven out of ten dentists responding to a survey stated that, if you chew gum, new 'Revolver' gum is safer for your teeth.'

- Do most dentists in Australia think that 'Revolver' is safer?
- Could 'Revolver' cause cavities in your teeth?
- Check through newspapers and magazines for similar vague claims.

The inhabitants of a South Pacific island, when tested by Dutch doctors in 1867, were found to be free of lung cancer. Part of their well balanced diet was a pint of coconut milk a day. The superintendent of a hospital recommended that people should regularly drink coconut milk.

- What effect do you think regular drinking of coconut milk would have on the chance of someone in your class contracting lung cancer?

HOW MUCH INFORMATION CAN WE GET OUT OF FIGURES?

Use the table below on the world's worst accidents and disasters to answer the following questions:

- What are the five worst disasters?
- Which country has had the most disasters?
- In which hemisphere did most disasters occur?
- Which disasters occurred in English-speaking countries?
- How many disasters were caused by people?
- Which natural disasters have claimed lives?
- How accurate are the statistics? Explain why some may be unreliable.

DISASTER	FATALITIES	PLACE	DATE
Famine	9 500 000	Northern China	Feb.1877-Sept.1878
Fireworks	800	Dauphine's wedding, Paris	16 May 1770
Flood	700 000	Hwang-Ho River, China	Aug.1931
Man-eating tigress	436	Champawat district, India	shot 1907
Disease (Black Death)	75 000 000	Europe	1347-1351
Circular storm	1 000 000	Ganges Delta islands, Bangladesh	12-13 Nov.1970
Mining (coal dust)	1 572	Honkeiko Colliery, China	26 Apr.1942
Road (bus crash)	127	Egypt	9 Aug.1973
Dam burst	2 209	Pennsylvania, U.S.A.	31 May 1889
Atomic bomb	141 000	Hiroshima, Japan	6 Aug.1945
Conventional bombing	135 000	Dresden, Germany	13-15 Feb.1945
Marine (German liner torpedoed)	C.7 700	off Cape Cod, U.S.A.	30 Jan.1945
Tornado	689	Southern Central U.S.A	18 Mar.1925
Hail	246	Moradabad, India	20 Apr.1888
Railway	543	Modane, France	12 Dec.1917
Crocodiles	C.900	Ramree Island, Burma	19-20 Feb.1945
Fire (theatre)	1 670	Canton, China	May 1845
Landslide	180 000	Kansu Province, China	16 Dec.1920
Submarine	129	U.S.S.R. Submarine	10 Apr.1963

Adapted from *Guinness Book of Records*, Guinness Superlatives Ltd., 1977, 24th Edn. p.207.

DAILY X

10 THE DAILY NEWSPAPER

Daily newspapers are a readily available and inexpensive source of information frequently used by students for a wide variety of purposes including:

- finding out what entertainment is available
- coverage of sporting events
- advertisements for employment
- advertisements of items for sale
- keeping up-to-date with news
- editorial opinion and journalists' interpretations
- investigating social issues

Where do you begin to read a newspaper - the sports pages, the comics or the front page ?

STUDYING THE NEWSPAPER

Information in newspapers is usually presented and arranged according to a standard pattern. For instance, the major news items (especially if they are sensational!) are to be found on the front page, whilst more regular features such as the stock exchange reports, comics, and sports results are found on the back pages.

A very simple method for finding out what a newspaper actually contains is **content analysis**. This involves choosing one or two aspects or features of the daily newspaper, such as overseas news or advertisements and working out such facts as how much space is given to that aspect, where does it occur in the paper, or whether the information given is fact or opinion. For example, a table such as the one below can be used to calculate the amount of space given to one feature.

Similar tables can be used to examine the frequency of other features such as different types of advertising (e.g. aimed at men, aimed at women, public notices), different types of news (e.g. human interest, political, financial), or the amount of local and state news compared to overseas.

The following exercises will give you some ideas for studying different features of the daily newspaper.

FEATURE	APPROXIMATE PROPORTION OF SPACE PER PAGE											
	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3	Page 4	Page 5	Page 6						
Overseas news	2/3	1/8	1/4	all								
Australian politics	—	—	1/8	1/16	—							
Advertisements	1/16	1/3	1/4	1/4	1/2	all						
Local news	—	1/8	1/4	—								

NEWS

News articles can be divided up according to topics, and according to how much space they are given.

Make a list or a content analysis table of the headlines on the first four pages of the newspaper, and classify each headline according to type of news, as set out below:

Page	Headline	Classification
2	REAGAN LANDSLIDE	Overseas news
6	JURORS DEADLOCKED	Crime report
28	DREARY SHAKESPEARE	Entertainment
40	B.H.P. SHARES SOAR	Business

When you have completed the list, work out:

- which kind of news has been given the most space
- how one item on a page is made to seem more important than the others
- how the headlines differ between two different newspapers printed on the same day

Try to obtain newspapers from other cities or states printed on the same day and see how their news content (especially the headlines) vary.

OPINIONS

Opinions are expressed in several ways in newspapers.

Editorials

Read the editorial column of the paper, and then find the news item it is based on. Compare the two and underline any statements in the editorial that are opinion, not fact. Discuss whether the comment is fair.

Journalist's bias

Pick an article from the sports section of the paper. Underline any statement where the journalist is giving an opinion rather than just the facts.

Reviews

Find a review of a book, a film, a record, or a new television show. Read it through carefully, and then underline the points it makes that are useful in helping you decide whether you want to read the book, see the film, listen to the record, see the television show ... or not!

Letters to the editor

Make a list of the issues on which members of the public have written to the paper. Choose one letter on an issue that interests you and reply to it.

Opinion polls

Find out how opinion polls are conducted. Find a recently published opinion poll and, when you have analysed the findings, write a few comments on the significance of the findings.

ADVERTISEMENTS

List the headings under which the classified advertisements are set out. Underline those that are of most interest to you.

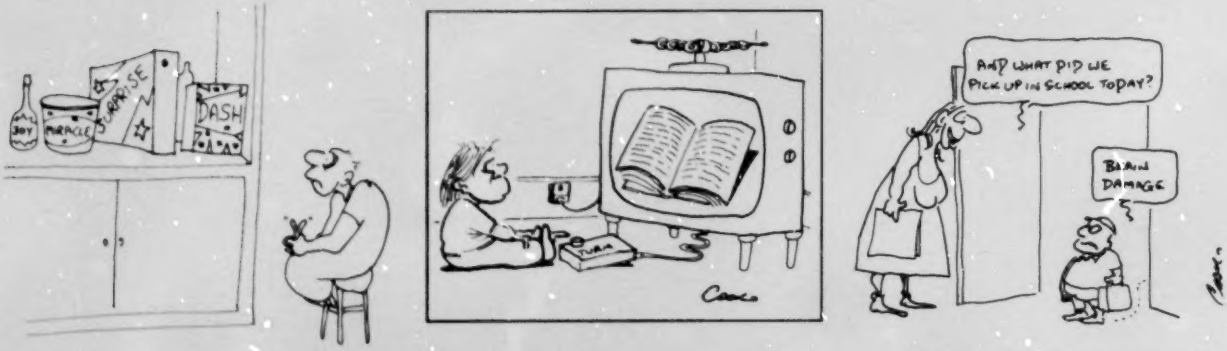
Estimate the amount of space given to other forms of advertising in the paper.

You have won approximately $6 000 in a state lottery and want to buy a car. Look through the advertisements to see what you could afford. List models, years, and prices.

Make a collection of any advertisements which you think are sexist or racist. Write a letter to the company involved stating your views on the advertisement which you think is the worst.

OTHER SECTIONS

Cut out all the cartoons and classify them according to their theme. Pick out the one that makes the strongest social comment and state what you think is the main point being made.



Patrick Cook, *Dancing in the Desert with Cook*, Sun Books Pty Ltd

Name the magazine sections that appear in the paper throughout the week.

11 ORGANISING INFORMATION AND NOTETAKING

Often it is necessary for the information you have collected to be organised into some form of report which can communicate your findings to others.

The following exercises relate mainly to notetaking or the processing and organising of written material.

Notes are frequently used

- to summarise material from textbooks and reference books;
- as a record of material discussed in class;
- as a record of classroom activities, discussion groups, or excursions; and
- as background or extra information on films, books, or current affairs.

The form that notes take will vary according to the situation. When making a summary of a book it is important to be brief, but background notes to some news items may need to be extensive to explain the situation fully. The following general rules can help to make notes which are useful both for yourself and others.

- Put a heading at the top of each page indicating the subject or main topic that the notes will be used for.
- Use headings and sub-headings so that it is easy to locate any specific point.
- Never copy straight from your source unless you mark it as a direct quote, with quotation marks or underlining.
- Check that you understand the original text completely, looking up any words you do not understand in the dictionary.
- Only write down information that is useful to you; keep to the point.

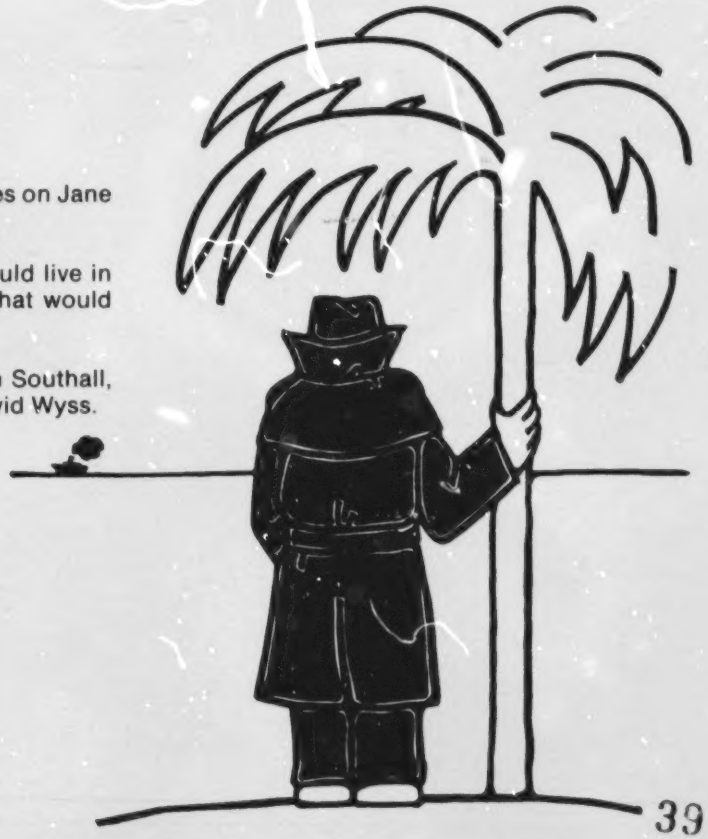
The following items are about people living in isolation. Read them carefully, make notes, and use the information to write a report on 'Living Alone'.

Organise your information under the following sub-headings:

- reasons for living alone
- the attitudes of people who live alone to the rest of society
- difficulties of living alone
- types of people who live alone
- the most interesting hermit
- suitable places for living alone

To collect more information for this report:

- Write about anyone you know who lives in isolation in your area.
- Look up the newspapers for September 1971 and see if there are any articles on Jane Cooper.
- Use an atlas or local map to find a place in your area where someone could live in isolation and check with the local council that there are no regulations that would prevent someone from living there legally.
- Read a novel about people living in remote places; e.g. *Storm Boy* by Ivan Southall, *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe and *Swiss Family Robinson* by John David Wyss.



HERMIT GIRL

Perhaps it was the bustle of the twentieth century that prompted Jane Cooper, a Melbourne girl, to defy John Donne's words. She went to live alone on remote De Witt Island off the Tasmanian coast. De Witt Island is only 2 000 hectares in size and is covered with rocks and scrub.

Jane went to live there in September 1971 when she was 18 years of age. She decided to write poetry, to grow organic vegetables, and to play the flute. However she was plagued by the Tasmanian Lands Department, who considered Jane the unlawful occupier of the island, and by newspaper reporters who thought Jane's life style was sensational enough to sell newspapers.

'I enjoy life, but people frighten me by their attitudes to life. This island seemed just the place — it was far enough away from the cities and everything else I wanted to get away from', Jane told the reporters. By 'getting away from it all' Jane gained more publicity than serenity and finally left the island to become just another 'face in the crowd'.

THE POSSUM

One of Australia's most unusual recluses must be 'The Possum'. He is now 57 years of age. He 'dropped out' of society in 1928. Each year he travels around along the Murray and Darling Rivers. Few people claim to have seen him and fewer have spoken to him. He shaves with broken glass and survives by eating honey, ducks, fish, rabbits, Murray lobsters, and kangaroos.

He often conceals himself in a hole covered with foliage and waits for a kangaroo to come to the water's edge to drink. Then he grabs it and kills it for food. Once he fell twelve metres from a tree-top and hurt himself while gathering leaves for a sheep at a time of drought. He treated the injury himself. Last year people were worried that 'The Possum's' health might be deteriorating as he had not been seen for a while. Attempts were made to get him to settle down and receive a social service pension but to date efforts have failed. Apparently, 'The Possum' went 'bush' in 1928 because he was too proud to admit that he was financially broke, and he did not want to be dependent on anyone else.

THE WAY OF SILENCE

In the early days of Christianity there were many who simply adopted a wandering life in the desert. Others lived absolutely alone as hermits. These people found that some form of social, organised life was needed to provide security so monasteries and convents were built. But they were able to keep their solitude by maintaining continuous silence among themselves.

Near Healesville on the banks of the Yarra River, lies Tarravarra, the home of twenty-eight monks called Cistercians. The Cistercians are a contemplative order who follow the teachings of St. Benedict.

When the monks get up at four o'clock every morning, they chant psalms and say their prayers. After breakfast there is time for private prayer or study or singing. Some of the monks work on the farm.

ESCAPE FROM WAR

In 1946, Stefanos Pantazis was called up for military service during the Greek Civil War. He was posted to a front line unit. Two years later he decided he had had enough of war and left the battlefront. An Athens court martial sentenced him to death for desertion.

Since that time, Stefanos has lived in isolation for fear of his life. Even now that the threat of death has been lifted, he prefers to live alone in a one room mountain shelter because he claims he has lost the habit of people.

Extracts from Jane Pewings 'Getting Away From It All' in *Pursuit*, No 4, 1976, Victorian Education Department

41

OTHER USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

Lesley Howard, *Inform — Language and Communication Skills*, Macmillan (Aust), 1979.

C. Stannard & M. Hungerford, *Life Skills Kit*, Jacaranda Wiley, 1980.

L. Kirkwood, *Earning a Living*, Pitman, 1979.

J. Jacobson & P. Maccoll, *Real Life Reading*, Ashton Scholastic, 1979.

J. Jacobson & P. Maccoll, *The Work Book*, Jacaranda Wiley, 1980.

Community Growth, SEMP (W.A.), Curriculum Development Centre, 1977.

Community Evolution, SEMP (W.A.), Curriculum Development Centre, 1977.

'Steven', *'Geoff'*, *'Michael'*, SEMP (Tas), Curriculum Development Centre, 1978.

People & the City, SEMP (Vic), Heinemann Educational, 1978.

Maureen Stewart, *Reading for Survival*, Rigby, 1979.

Ethos, Journal of the Victorian Association of Social Science Teachers.

Study of Society, Newsletter of the Victorian Association of Social Science Teachers.

A.J. Davison, M.L. Rowland, M.F. Sherry, *Strategies & Methods, A guide for teachers of consumer education and the social sciences*, V.C.T.A., 1977.

Maureen Stewart, *Leaving School — A Survival Guide*, Rigby, 1978.